

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

CONDUCTED BY R. CHAMBERS (SECUNDUS)

No. 67.—VOL. II.

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 1885.

Price 1½d.

POPULAR APPLICATIONS OF PROPER NAMES.

In this age of universal research, it is hardly necessary to enlarge upon the benefits to be derived from the study of philology. The fact that this pursuit opens to us boundless stores of historic truth is now universally recognised, and voluminous works of verbal criticism point out the derivations and meanings of the words, which are the stones, so to speak, in the mighty fabric of language. We would, however, briefly venture to call the attention of our readers to a class of words in our own language which is particularly interesting, as containing memorials of nations, and more especially of individuals. Many names have become incorporated in the English language in remembrance of some characteristics of their original bearers; but in spite of the efforts of their contemporaries and immediate successors to immortalise their fame, these etymological heroes have in many cases sunk into oblivion; while others live only in the dry tributes accorded to their memories in dictionaries and encyclopædias. There are, of course, notable exceptions; but the time may come when even the words which to us are associated with the individuality of the persons whom they commemorate, will have lost their present significance, while already, to a large majority of the uneducated public, they are mere empty sounds.

We would first recall a few of those words which lead us back to national or tribal characteristics. In *myrmidons* we have the name of a race of Thessalians who followed Achilles to the famous siege of Troy, and by their savage brutality and rapacity perpetuated their fame as unscrupulous followers of a daring leader. In *laconic* we have a standing memorial of the preference of the Laconians or Spartans for brief and pithy speaking. A striking example of this occurred when Philip of Macedon in his career of conquest warned the Spartan rulers that 'if he entered Laconia, he would raze Lacedæmon to the ground;' and received by way of answer or

comment the single monosyllable 'If.' It may be remarked that this reply would have come better from the Spartans at an earlier stage of their history, for already luxury had reduced the state to a shadow of its former greatness, and not long after it yielded to the conqueror. *Frank* and its derivatives remind us of the independent spirit and love of truth which distinguished the German tribe who at the breaking-up of the Roman empire possessed themselves of Gaul, to which they gave their name. A sadder cry comes from the word *slave*, which gained its present degraded significance from the fact that vast multitudes of the Slavs—a name in Slavonic signifying 'noble'—were carried captive from their homes on the banks of the Danube by their Roman masters. Before passing from the broader basis of history to the biography of individuals, we may mention another national designation incorporated in our language, namely, *gasconade*, a term of contemptuous ridicule applied to the habit of vain-glorious boasting ascribed to the natives of Gascony.

In turning to names of individuals, it is singular to notice how many words in daily use commemorate persons whose names are otherwise unrecognised and forgotten. The word *pamphlet*, for instance, is perhaps derived from the name of a Grecian lady Pamphila, who flourished in the first century of the Christian era, and who wrote numerous epitomes of history. Again, it was the Earl of *Sandwich*, in the time of George III., who brought into common use the article of food which bears his name; although the gambling propensities which rendered a midnight refreshment of that kind indispensable to him scarcely entitle him to respect. Some people also acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Colonel *Negus*, a member of a Norfolk family in the reign of Queen Anne, as the inventor of the beverage which bears his name; while others rejoice in the example of abstemiousness held up by the London undertaker William *Banting*, who published in 1863 a pamphlet on the treatment of corpulence. The names of two artisans of the eighteenth century have been preserved to us by their work or its

imitation. These are the French *Buhl* or *Boule*, a cabinet-maker to whom Louis XIV. granted apartments in the Louvre in recompense of specimens of beautiful inlaid brass-work; and his English contemporary *Pinchbeck*, whose ingenuity in imitating precious metal is hardly recompensed by the somewhat contemptuous meaning now attached to his name.

Several terms of a similar derivation connected with crime or its punishment occur to us. The first of these, the verb to *burke*, recalls with horror the manner in which a notorious murderer pursued his monstrous trade. Another, the American word *lynch*, perpetuates the name of a Virginian farmer of the seventeenth century, noted for sound judgment and impartiality, who was selected by the inhabitants of his district—far removed from any regular court of justice—to pass sentence on offenders whose crimes demanded speedy retribution. The terrible instrument of death which we meet with again and again in the bloody annals of the French Revolution derives its name from an eminent physician, Joseph Ignace *Guillotin*, who in the Constituent Assembly of 1789, with the humane view of avoiding unnecessary suffering to persons sentenced to capital punishment, moved the adoption of this mode of decapitation. The proposal was for a time dropped; but three years later, this method of execution was adopted. The dread instrument was at first, in memory of another surgeon, Antoine Louis, who determined its form, known as *la petite louison*. But the mind of the nation reverted to him who first suggested its use, and it is Guillotin's hard fate to be thereby remembered. It has often been stated that Dr Guillotin fell a victim to his bloody namesake, as the Scottish Regent Morton to the 'Maiden' which he had invented. But although Guillotin was at one time in some danger, it is satisfactorily proved that he survived the Revolution and died a natural death. Before passing to a pleasanter phase of our subject, we may recall the *Bowie* knife, worn in the Southern and Western States of America, and named from its inventor, Colonel Bowie.

Science in its onward progress has assimilated many names of inventors and discoverers, which, as merely technical terms, are beyond our present scope. We may, however, point out the name given to the comparatively recent discovery of *galvanism* from Dr Galvani of Bologna, who first observed its extraordinary effect upon animals; while *mesmerism* perpetuates the name of the German physician, Mesmer, who first practised it about 1766. Two methods of portraiture, revealing the infancy of the art of photography, will also occur to our readers. These are the *daguerreo-type*, or first form of photograph on a copper plate, invented by the French scene-painter Daguerre in 1835; and the *talbotype*, a process of obtaining a negative from which prints can be thrown off, which was the invention of Mr Fox Talbot, an eminent member of the Royal

Society. The older method of executing a cheap and meagre portrait, known as the *silhouette*, by tracing the outline of a shadow thrown on to a sheet of paper, was named in derision after Etienne de la Silhouette, a French minister of finance in 1759, who introduced some reforms which were considered unduly parsimonious. The names of two Scotchmen who passed away in the first half of the present century present themselves as belonging to this class of words. Charles *Mackintosh*, a native of Glasgow, added in 1822 to his other services in the science of chemistry his discovery of the process of procuring a water-proof varnish by dissolving india-rubber in naphtha, which has spread his fame to every portion of the civilised world; while John *Macadam* conferred a national benefit by his invention, about the beginning of the century, of the system of road-making which bears his name. Space prevents an enumeration of the other inventions which have in their designations perpetuated the names, if not in all cases the memories of their authors, and we also pass over articles bearing the names of men of widely different fame who have popularised them by their use, such as *Wellington* and *Blücher* boots, *Garibaldi* bodices, and *Broughams*.

Turning now to individuals who by their circumstances, characteristics, or achievements have left their impress upon our language, several classical examples first present themselves. The adjective *stentorian* commemorates the loud and far-reaching voice of the Greek herald Stentor, whose fame is preserved by Homer. So also the verb *tantalise* recalls the terrible sentence of the gods on the ancient king, Tantalus, who was condemned to linger in intolerable thirst, while refreshing fruits and fresh water were ever in his sight, only to retreat when he attempted to reach them. The name of another royal personage, Mausolus of Caria, is preserved to us in a somewhat melancholy manner by the word *mausoleum*, first applied to the monument erected to his memory by his sorrowing queen. From an early experimenter in the walks of chemistry, the Chaldean philosopher Hermes Trismegistus, mentioned by Milton in his *Il Penseroso*, we have the expression *hermetically sealed*, which, from its original application to closing up the necks of bottles, has gradually gained a more general significance. Another despised term, *scaramouch*, commemorates the somewhat envious contempt of the Londoners for the feats of agility exhibited in that city in 1673 by an Italian mountebank named Scaramoche.

Some names which fall within the range of our subject have been twisted and perverted until their application and meaning are hardly reconcilable with the facts to which they originally referred. One of these strange perversions unworthily commemorates a woman belonging to Old Testament history; for the use of the word *abigail* for maid-servant sprung originally from the account of the interview between David and Nabal's wife, in which she repeatedly calls herself his 'handmaid.' Possibly the circumstance of the Christian name of Queen Anne's favourite waiting-woman, Mrs Masham, being Abigail further popularised this sense of the word. We may mention another word derived from a Biblical name which points more sadly to the fact that virtues are too

often in the eyes of the world regarded as weaknesses or vices, and is a striking example of the manner in which words of high moral significance are debased to unworthy uses. It has been well said that if penitential tears had been held in due honour in the world, the weeping *Magdalen* of Christian art could never have given us the word *maudlin*. A curious sequence of ideas derives tawdry from St Audrey or Ethelreda, the sainted Saxon princess whose memorial is the glorious cathedral of Ely. A fair used to be held annually in the isle of Ely on St Audrey's day, October 17th, at which worthless but showy wares freely changed hands, and to these mementos of the day the name of the saint gradually came to be applied.

But a harder and totally undeserved fate is the derivation of the term of contempt *dunce* from the name of the great schoolman of the fourteenth century, Duns Scotus. It is indeed a strange lot that the name of this great teacher of Christian truth, one of the keenest and most subtle-witted of men, should have been turned into a byword expressive of stupidity and obstinate dullness. But the transition has been explained in the following manner. Duns Scotus flourished at a time when controversy was rife, and he headed the school of thought of which the adherents are generally known as Scotists, against the followers of his rival philosopher, Thomas Aquinas. We can easily imagine that the disciples of Duns Scotus were sometimes called by their opponents *Dunses* or *Dunses*, which was gradually developed from a name of party strife into a general term of scorn. The opprobrious epithet is alleged by others to have been applied indiscriminately, after the revival of letters, to the adherents of the scholastic philosophy, in opposition to classical literature, of whom Duns Scotus was taken as the representative.

Only a little less humiliating to the memory of an ancient worthy is the fact that every 'glib and loquacious hireling' who shows strangers through palaces, picture-galleries, and churches, is termed by the Italians a *cicerone*, after the greatest orator of their nation. The present application of the name of *Hector*, the hero of the siege of Troy, is also singularly inappropriate, for it is not the modest and noble-minded patriot of classical history, but his unworthy imitator in medieval pageants, who is represented in modern times by the boaster and the bully.

The French army supplies a more honourable hero, an officer in the time of Louis XIV., whose name *Martinet* is preserved in our language as a term for a strict disciplinarian, while his own countrymen have given it the more practical significance of the instrument of corporal punishment popularly known as the 'cat-o'-nine-tails'!

A vast number of words of varied significance, derived from the names of races and individuals who have long since passed away, will no doubt present themselves to the minds of our readers in addition to those which we have briefly enumerated; but we will close our category with a word of very recent adoption which bids fair to vindicate its claims to perpetuity. We refer to the application of the name of Captain *Boycott* to the iniquitous system of terrorism prevalent in Ireland, of which he was one of the first victims. This late addition to our vocabulary

will serve to remind us of the ever-increasing nature of language, and of its value as a storehouse, in which we may find a key to many obscure pages of the history of the past.

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

CHAPTER XV.

THE walk with Constance, though he had set out upon it reluctantly, had done Waring great good. He was comparatively rehabilitated in his own eyes. Between her and him there was no embarrassment, no uneasy consciousness. She had paid him the highest compliment by taking refuge with him, flying to his protection from the tyranny of her mother, and giving him thus a victory as sweet as unexpected over that nearest yet furthest of all connections, that inalienable antagonist in life. He had been painfully put out of *son assiette*, as the French say. Instead of the easy superiority which he had held not only in his own house but in the limited society about, he had been made to stand at the bar, first by his own child, afterwards by the old clergyman, for whom he entertained a kindly contempt. Both of these simple wits had called upon him to account for his conduct. It was the most extraordinary turning of the tables that ever had occurred to a man like himself. And though he had spoken the truth when in that moment of melting he had taken his little girl into his arms and bidden her stay with him, he was yet glad now to get away from Frances, to feel himself occupying his proper place with her sister, and to return thus to a more natural state of affairs. The intercourse between him and his child-companion had been closer than ever could, he believed, exist between him and any other human being whatsoever; but it had been rent in twain by all the concealments which he was conscious of, by all the discoveries which circumstances had forced upon her. He could no longer be at his ease with her, or she regard him as of old. The attachment was too deep, the interruption too hard, to be reconcilable with that calm which is necessary to ordinary existence. Constance had restored him to herself by her pleasant indifference, her easy talk, her unconsciousness of everything that was not usual and natural. He began to think that if Frances were but away—since she wished to go—a new life might begin—a life in which there would be nothing below the surface, no mystery, which is a mistake in ordinary life. It would be difficult, no doubt, for a brilliant creature like Constance to content herself with the humdrum life which suited Frances; and whether she would condescend to look after his comforts, he did not know. But so long as Mariuccia was there, he could not suffer much materially; and she was a very amusing companion, far more so than her sister. As he came back to the Palazzo, he was reconciled to himself.

This comfortable state of mind, however, did not last long. Frances met them at the door with her face full of excitement. 'Did you meet him?' she said. 'You must have met him. He has not been gone ten minutes.'

'Meet whom? We met no one but the general.'

'I think I know,' cried Constance. 'I have been expecting him every day—Markham.'

'He says he has come to fetch me, papa.'

'Markham!' cried Waring. His face clouded over in a moment. It is not easy to get rid of the past. He had accomplished it for a dozen years; and after a very bad moment, he thought he was about to shuffle it off again; but it was evident that in this he was premature. 'I will not allow you to go with Markham,' he said. 'Don't say anything more. Your mother ought to have known better. He is not an escort I choose for my daughter.'

'Poor old Markham! he is a very nice escort,' said Constance, in her easy way. 'There is no harm in him, papa. But never mind till after dinner, and then we can talk it over.—You are ready, Fan?—Oh, then I must fly. We have had a delightful walk. I never knew anything about fathers before; they are the most charming companions,' she said, kissing her hand to him as she went away. But this did not mollify the angry man. There rose up before him the recollection of a hundred contests in which Markham's mocking voice had come in to make everything worse, or of which Markham's escapades had been the cause.

'I will not see him,' he said; 'I will not sanction his presence here. You must give up the idea of going altogether, till he is out of the way.'

'I think, papa, you must see him.'

'Must—there is no *must*. I have not been in the habit of acknowledging compulsion, and be assured that I shall not begin now. You seem to expect that your small affairs are to upset my whole life!'

'I suppose,' said Frances, 'my affairs are small; but then they are my life too.'

She ought to have been subdued into silence by his first objection; but, on the contrary, she met his angry eyes with a look which was deprecating, but not abject, holding her little own. It was a long time since Waring had encountered anything which he could not subdue and put aside out of his path. But, he said to himself—all that long restrained and silent temper which had once reigned and raged within him, springing up again unsubdued—he might have known! The moment long deferred, yet inevitable, which brought him in contact once more with his wife, could bring nothing with it but pain. Strife breathed from her wherever she appeared. He had never been a match for her and her boy, even at his best; and now that he had forgotten the ways of battle—now that his strength was broken with long quiet, and the sword had fallen from his hand: she had a pull over him now

which she had not possessed before. He could have done without both the children a dozen years ago. He was conscious that it was more from self-assertion than from love that he had carried off the little one, who was rather an embarrassment than a pleasure in those days, because he would not let her have everything her own way. But now, Frances was no longer a creature without identity, not a thing to be handed from one to another. He could not free himself of interest in her, of responsibility for her, of feeling his honour and credit implicated in all that concerned her. Ah! that woman knew. She had a hold upon him that she never had before; and the first use she made of it was to insult him—to send her son, whom he hated, for his daughter, to force him into unwilling intercourse with her family once more.

Frances took the opportunity to steal away while her father gloomily pursued these thoughts. What a change from the tranquillity which nothing disturbed! now one day after another, there was some new thing that stirred up once more the original pain. There was no end to it. The mother's letters at one moment, the brother's arrival at another, and no more quiet whatever could be done, no more peace.

Nevertheless, dinner and the compulsory decorum which surrounds that great daily event, had its usual tranquillising effect. Waring could not shut out from his mind the consciousness that to refuse to see his wife's son, the brother of his own children, was against all the decencies of life. It is easy to say that you will not acknowledge social compulsion, but it is not so easy to carry out that determination. By the time that dinner was over, he had begun to perceive that it was impossible. He took no part, indeed, in the conversation, lightly maintained by Constance, about her brother, made short replies even when he was directly addressed, and kept up more or less the lowering aspect with which he had meant to crush Frances. But Frances was not crushed, and Constance was excited and gay. 'Let us send for him after dinner,' she said. 'He is always amusing. There is nothing Markham does not know. I have seen nobody for a fortnight, and no doubt a hundred things have happened.—Do send for Markham, Frances.—Oh, you must not look at papa. I know papa is not fond of him. Dear! if you think one can be fond of everybody one meets—especially one's connections. Everybody knows that you hate half of them. That makes it piquant. There is nobody you can say such spiteful things to as people whom you belong to, whom you call by their Christian names.'

'That is a charming Christian sentiment—entirely suited to the surroundings you have been used to, Con; but not to your sister's.'

'Oh, my sister! She has heard plenty of hard things said of that good little Tasie, who is her chief friend. Frances would not say them herself. She doesn't know how. But her surroundings are not so ignorant. You are not called upon to assume so much virtue, papa.'

'I think you forget a little to whom you are speaking,' said Waring with quick anger.

'Papa!' cried Constance with an astonished look, 'I think it is you who forget. We are not in the middle ages. Mamma failed to

remember that. I hope you have not forgotten too, or I should be sorry I came here.'

He looked at her with a sudden gleam of rage in his eyes. That temper which had fallen into disuse, was no more overcome than when all this trouble began; but he remained silent, putting force upon himself, though he could not quite conceal the struggle. At last he burst into an angry laugh: 'You will train me, perhaps, in time to the subjection which is required from the nineteenth-century parent,' he said.

'You are charming,' said his daughter with a bow and smile across the table. 'There is only this lingering trace of medievalism in respect to Markham. But you know, papa, really, a feud can't exist in these days. Now, answer me yourself; can it? It would subject us all to ridicule. My experience is that people as a rule are *not* fond of each other; but to show it is quite a different thing. O no, papa; no one can do that.'

She was so certain of what she said, so calm in the enunciation of her dogmas, that he only looked at her and made no other reply. And when Constance appealed to Frances whether Domenico should not be sent to the hotel to call Markham, he avoided the inquiring look which Frances cast at him. 'If papa has no objection,' she said with hesitation and alarm. 'Oh, papa can have no objection,' Constance cried; and the message was sent; and Markham came. Frances, frightened, made many attempts to excuse herself; but her father would neither see nor hear the efforts she made. He retired to the bookroom while the girls entertained their visitor on the loggia; or rather, while he entertained them. Waring heard the voices mingled with laughter, as we all hear the happier intercourse of others when we are ourselves in gloomy opposition, nursing our wrath. He thought they were all the more lively, all the more gay, because he was displeased. Even Frances. He forgot that he had made up his mind that Frances had better go (as she wished to go), and felt that she was a little monster to take so cordially to the stranger whom she knew he disliked and disapproved. Nevertheless, in spite of this irritation and misery, the little lecture of Constance on what was conventionally necessary had so much effect upon him, that he appeared on the loggia before Markham went away, and conquered himself sufficiently to receive, if not to make much response to the salutations which his wife's son offered. Markham jumped up from his seat with the greatest cordiality, when this tall shadow appeared in the soft darkness. 'I can't tell you how glad I am to see you, sir, after all these years. I hope I am not such a nuisance as I was when you knew me before—at the age when all males should be kept out of sight of their seniors, as the sage says.'

'What sage was that?—Ah! his experience was all at second-hand.'

'Like yours, sir,' said Markham. And then there was a slight pause, and Constance struck in.

'Markham is a great institution to people who don't get the *Morning Post*. He has told me a heap of things. In a fortnight, when one is not on the spot, it is astonishing what quan-

ties of things happen. In town, one gets used to having one's gossip hot and hot every day.'

'The advantage of abstinence is that you get up such an appetite for your next meal. I had only a few items of news.—My mother gave me many messages for you, sir. She hopes you will not object to trust little Frances to my care.'

'I object—to trust my child to any one's care,' said Waring quickly.

'I beg your pardon. You intend, then, to take my sister to England yourself,' the stranger said.

It was dark, and their faces were invisible to each other; but the girls looking on saw a momentary swaying of the tall figure towards the smaller one, which suggested something like a blow. Frances had nearly sprung from her seat; but Constance put out her hand and restrained her. She judged rightly. Passion was strong in Waring's mind. He could, had inclination prevailed, have seized the little man by the coat and pitched him out into the road below. But bonds were upon him more potent than if they had been made of iron.

'I have no such intention,' he said. 'I should not have sent her at all. But it seems she wishes to go. I will not interfere with her arrangements. But she must have some time to prepare.'

'As long as she likes, sir,' said Markham cheerfully. 'A few days more out of the east wind will be delightful to me.'

And no more passed between them. Waring strolled about the loggia with his cigarette. Though Frances had made haste to provide a new chair as easy as the other, he had felt himself dislodged, and had not yet settled into a new place; and when he joined them in the evening, he walked about or sat upon the wall, instead of lounging in indolent comfort, as in the old quiet days. On this evening he stood at the corner, looking down upon the lights of the Marina in the distance, and the gray twinkle of the olives in the clear air of the night. The poor neighbours of the little town were still on the Punte, enjoying the coolness of the evening hours; and the murmur of their talk rose on one side, a little softened by distance; while the group on the loggia renewed its conversation close at hand. Waring stood and listened with a contempt of it which he partially knew to be unjust. But he was sore and bitter, and the ease and gaiety seemed a kind of insult to him, one of many insults which he was of opinion he had received from his wife's son. 'Confounded little fool,' he said to himself.

But Constance was right in her worldly wisdom. It would make them all ridiculous if he made objections to Markham, if he showed openly his distaste to him. The world was but a small world at Bordighera; but yet it was not without its power. The interrupted conversation went on with great vigour. He remarked with a certain satisfaction that Frances talked very little; but Constance and her brother—as he called himself, the puppy!—never paused. There is no such position for seeing the worst of ordinary conversation. Waring stood looking out blankly upon the bewildering lines of the hills towards

the west, with the fresh breeze in his face, and his cigarette only kept alight by a violent puff now and then, listening to the lively chatter. How vacant it was—about this one and that one; about So-and-so's peculiarities; about things not even made clear, which each understood at half a word, which made them laugh. Good heavens, at what? Not at the wit of it, for there was no wit. At some ludicrous image involved, which to the listener was dull, dull as the village chatter on the other side; but more dull, more vapid in its artificial ring. How they echoed each other, chiming in; how they remembered anecdotes to the discredit of their friends; how they ran on in the same circle endlessly, with jests that were without point even to Frances, who sat listening in an eager tension of interest, but could not keep up to the height of the talk, which was all about people she did not know—and still more without point to Waring, who had known, but knew no longer, and who was angry and mortified and bitter, feeling his supremacy taken from him in his own house, and all his habits shattered, yet knew very well that he could not resist, that to show his dislike would only make him ridiculous; that he was once more subject to Society, and dare not show his contempt for its bonds.

After a while, he flung his half-finished cigarette over the wall, and stalked away, with a brief, 'Excuse me, but I must say good-night.' Markham sprang up from his chair; but his step-father only waved his hand to the little party sitting in the evening darkness, and went away, his footsteps sounding upon the marble floor through the salone and the anteroom, closing the doors behind him. There was a little silence as he disappeared.

'Well,' said Markham with a long-drawn breath, 'that's over, Con; and better than might have been expected.'

'Better! Do you call that better? I should say almost as bad as could be. Why didn't you stand up to him and have it out?'

'My dear, he always cows me a little,' said Markham. 'I remember times when I stood up to him, as you say, with that idiocy of youth in which you are so strong, Con; but I think I generally came off second best. Our respected papa has a great gift of language when he likes.'

'He does not like now; he is too old; he has given up that sort of thing. Ask Frances. She thinks him the mildest of pious fathers.'

'If you please,' said the little voice of Frances out of the gloom, with a little quiver in it, 'I wish you would not speak about papa so, before me. It is perhaps quite right of you, who have no feeling for him, or don't know him very well; but with me it is quite different. Whether you are right or wrong, I cannot have it, please.'

'The little thing is quite right, Con,' said Markham.—'I beg your pardon, little Fan. I have a great respect for papa, though he has none for me.—Too old! He is not so old as I am, and a much more estimable member of society. He is not old enough—that is the worst of it—for you and me.'

'I am not going to encourage her in her nonsense,' said Constance, 'as if one's father or

mother was something sacred, as if they were not just human beings like ourselves. But apart from that, as I have told Frances, I think very well of papa.'

SEED AND SOIL.

FARMERS with their seed sown are so completely at the mercy of the weather, that they have not inaptly been compared to sailors who before they left port had to set their sails, and were thereafter debarred from altering them till the voyage was ended. When farmers do suffer from unfavourable weather, the public are ready to give them practical sympathy; but if it could be shown that 'bad weather' is the scapegoat of very many failures which by skill and industry could be averted, then much of their grumbling would have to cease.

In 1877, which it may be remembered was rather a bad year for farmers, an investigation was made, at the instance of the government, into the circumstances which affected the growth of wheat, oats, and barley; and some curious facts were brought out to show that, besides weather, the character of soil and seed have more to do with the harvest than has been generally supposed, even by farmers themselves. Though the general character of the soil can be little altered, yet, by thorough and skilful cultivation, the farmer is able to make the most of its natural resources. In one case which was investigated, two neighbouring farms, under the same conditions as regards soil and climate, and also, it may be added, valued and taxed alike, were found to yield totally different results. The one was properly and thoroughly tilled, and yielded per acre fifty bushels of oats, weighing forty-three pounds each; while the other, which had a thin slice of its surface turned over annually, yielded only at the rate of ten bushels, of twenty-two pounds each, per acre. Here was a loss of nearly two thousand pounds of oats through what was probably little else than slovenly farming.

In another case, the good effect of drainage was plainly shown. The oats which grew on two adjoining fields—the one drained, and the other undrained, but otherwise under similar conditions—were examined, and it was found that the former yielded four hundred and thirty-eight pounds of oats, and of a superior quality, more than the latter, besides a considerable weight of straw. As additional proof of the value of thorough tillage and drainage, the result of experiment is that without them there is no hope of the success of the recently much-talked-of continuous growth of corn; but by their means, on good land, success seems to have been well-nigh attained. At Sawbridgeworth, Mr Prout farms five hundred acres by steam, sells off the whole produce, and spends fifty shillings per acre on artificial manures; and it was found that the fourth crop of wheat—which was the ninth corn-crop in direct succession—was at the

rate of forty-eight bushels, of sixty-two pounds each, to the acre.

Another important item, but one to which too little attention seems to be given, is the selection of that seed most likely to utilise all the previous labour of tillage. Carelessness in this particular annually causes immense loss and much disappointment. When it is remembered that wheat, oats, and barley—corn-producing grasses—have been by cultivation brought to their present state, and also how much power we have over plants, the wonder is that farmers generally seem to be content with the progress made in this branch, while so much trouble is taken to have live-stock converted into 'improved' producers of meat. The difference between the return from good seed suitable for the soil and climate, and bad and unsuitable seed, is remarkable. In the investigation referred to, two fields similarly situated as to soil, climate, and management, but the one sown with a good and suitable, and the other with an unsuitable, variety of wheat, were found to yield at the rate of sixty bushels of sixty-three pounds, and forty bushels of sixty-four pounds, per acre respectively; which, valued at two pounds per quarter, showed that the farmer by the use of unsuitable seed suffered a loss of five pounds per acre. In the case of oats, the difference between the yield from good and bad seed sown under similar conditions seems to be even more marked. In one case examined, the good seed yielded thirty-five bushels, worth three shillings each; while the bad seed gave a return of only twenty-two bushels, worth about eighteen-pence each. The selection of a suitable seed cannot, however, be made once for all; for if the seed be grown and sown on the same farm year after year, it gradually becomes less productive; while if it be sown in a different soil and climate, the yield is considerably increased. Why this so-called 'change of seed' should be so beneficial, is as yet a mystery. Professor Tanner suggests that the conditions of growth as regards soil and climate are seldom perfect, and thus any imperfection in the seed is becoming annually more marked; but a change seems to rectify these imperfections, and to give an increased vigour of growth, just as a change of food and air does for an invalid. To prove the value of 'change of seed,' the produce of a field grown from changed seed, and that of another grown from seed grown on the same farm for some length of time, were examined; and it was found that though the conditions under which both specimens were grown were fairly equal, yet the produce in the first case exceeded that of the second by nine hundred and fifty-four pounds of grain per acre.

Though, under proper conditions, seed will keep for almost any length of time, yet, kept as it ordinarily is, some of the seeds yearly lose their vitality. At the New York Agricultural Experiment Station, Dr Sturtevant found that of turnip-seed one year old a hundred per cent. germinated, and ninety per cent. vegetated; while of seed twelve years old, only thirty-six per cent. germinated, and six per cent. vegetated. In the case of swedes, new seed seems to grow with greater rapidity than that two or three years old, but at a sacrifice of good form, and, what is worse, of feeding-value. Considerations like these, it may be suggested, should lead farmers to form for

themselves small experimental plots, and so be able to judge of the value of manures, seeds, &c., before risking many pounds in the purchase of them, while they are uncertain of their suitability.

A CHANGE IN THE CAST.

CHAPTER II.

MR JOSIAH JOWITT of the detective police force was universally allowed, by those best able to judge of such matters, to be at the top of the proverbial tree in his avocation. When any transgression of the laws of the land had taken place, and the statute-breaker was known to possess artfulness above the average of his class in eluding the vigilance of the vindicators of justice, the order that went forth from the chief at Scotland Yard was, 'Jowitt must take this case in hand,' whereupon the iniquitous career of the malefactor who happened to be 'wanted' was considered to be drawing to a very rapid close. The personal appearance of this astute unraveller of criminal Gordian knots could not, strictly speaking, be called prepossessing. He was under the average height; had reddish hair; a nose of abnormal size separated a pair of small, but keen and twinkling gray eyes; and his thin hatchet face was entirely innocent of any appendages of a hirsute nature.

As we now behold Mr Josiah Jowitt pacing to and fro in a less crowded part of the London, Brighton, and South Coast platform at London Bridge terminus, his face certainly indicates a somewhat perplexed state of the detective mind. Occasionally, he knits his brows and appears to be addressing the ground, so intent is he in bending his eyes in a downward direction. Presently, he is joined by a youthful-looking man, who seemed to spring up from nowhere in particular.

'Well, Dixon?' interrogated Mr Jowitt in a sharp tone.

'Missed him; bother it!' replied the individual. 'I believe in this way, sir'—

'Never mind *how* you missed him—you did; that is more than enough for me,' interrupted the renowned one, in a tone of voice evidently meant to impress his subordinate with the intense disgust which he doubtless inwardly experienced.

After a moment or two occupied in seeking inspiration out of the hard flagstones, he turned sharply to the crestfallen young man by his side and said: 'Now, you are quite certain about the information? He was to leave this particular station by an early morning train. Consider a moment now; might it not have been Victoria, for instance?'

'I am quite sure the place named was London Bridge, and no other,' emphatically answered the man, and with an air which seemed to lend conviction to his utterance.

'That will do, then, for the present; but be in readiness later on—I may want you;' and Josiah Jowitt dismissed his subordinate with a curt nod.

'Ah, if I didn't think something would be wrong!' soliloquised the irritated little man, as he resumed his exercise. 'What a fool I was not to come down myself! But there; what's the good of me talking like that! A man can't cut

his body in two pieces and have a head and brains to each! Now, I wonder if the woman has sold us? I don't think so; she seemed to be too much in earnest, and too unmistakably jealous of some lady, she said, that the fellow had got in with by some means or other. Ah, well it's now eleven-thirty, and no train on to that branch line till two-thirty. It is no use me waiting till that time here, as far as I can see. Not much use, either, telegraphing. Too many passengers at a time like this, even for so small a place as it is. I'll just—

'Hold, enough!' came in sonorous tones from a burly individual whom the detective had run up against.

'What, Mully, my boy!' exclaimed Josiah, as he recovered himself and looked up at his accoster.

'Tis myself—Marcus Mulford, and none other,' replied that individual, assuming an intensely theatrical air.

'And how does the world use you?' inquired Mr Jowitt.

'Hum! ha! pretty much in the old style, Josiah. And how wags it with you, my lord? Still successful in tracking the bandit to his cave—or, in the plain language of a prosaic age, I take it you have lost none of your ancient cunning in bringing to justice criminals who are "wanted," eh?'

'Well, well, I still manage to keep my hand in,' modestly answered the detective with a quiet smile.—'But,' continued he, 'let us adjourn to the refreshment room; it will not be quite so cold there.'

'You are right, Josiah; and a trifle of something on a keen day like this will do no harm to my inner man; therefore, "lead on—I'll follow thee."'

The two acquaintances having reached the proposed friendly shelter, each was soon engaged in consuming what he liked best; the disciple of Thespis indulged in a glass of rum, while the detective contented himself with a modest draught of beer.

After some few minutes had been whiled away by an interchange of observations on that grand old topic, the weather, and so forth, Mr Marcus Mulford pointed, with the substantial silver-headed cane he carried, to an advertisement frame which hung on the wall on the customers' side of the room. 'See that?' he asked of his companion.

Mr Jowitt nodded affirmatively.

'The legend inscribed thereon, you will observe,' continued Mr Mulford, 'is "Dobson & Co.'s noted Ales." I, though but a lowly individual, have the honour to be acquainted with Dobson & Co.; in fact, my dear Josiah, I am now on my way to the Dobsonian mansion—at least I shall be, when the two-thirty train steams out of this for Selwick.'

'Professionally?' inquired Josiah.

'Correct, my boy. The long and short of it is, sir, that at Hop Villa, the residence of Samuel Dobson, Esquire, an amateur performance is to take place to-night, and I am engaged for the responsible post of prompter. I have been down to the villa pretty frequently lately, and have met with the kindest treatment, sir; in fact, dear boy, I should not object to a similar engagement once a week the year round.'

'Amateurs, eh, Mully? Do you remember the

time when we used to inflict our stage-struck ravings upon our friends in the little room in Jerringham Street?'

'I do well remember it,' replied the actor, with a solemn shake of the head. 'It is a long time ago. "Thus creeps on our petty pace," as the great William truthfully has it.'

'And what sort of a performance do you expect, eh?'

'A tolerably tidy one. I have great faith in the ladies and gentlemen who take part in it. The piece is that legitimate and sterling comedy, *Still Waters Run Deep*. The principal characters will be well sustained. Young Mr Dobson—whom I am privileged to call by his Christian name, Samuel—will be, from what I have seen at rehearsals, a capital John Mildmay; while as for the captain—Hawksley, you know, the forger—he will be represented by about the most fitting man, professional and amateur, for the part that it has ever been my lot to come across. Yes, my boy, Mr Frederick Delancy is'—

'Eh?' exclaimed the detective with much enhanced interest, as the name fell from his friend's lips. Then quickly reassuming his previous air of ordinary attention, he said: 'Good actor, I suppose, this—this Mr what-d'ye-call-him?'

'I was about to observe,' said Mr Mulford, 'that Mr Frederick Delancy is an A one Captain Hawksley.'

'I daresay you're right, Mully my boy; and you've somewhat excited my curiosity. I should like to see this paragon of yours. Do you think you could manage it so that I could just have a peep at him, eh?'

'Hum! Well, you know'—

'Oh, I do not have much concern in the matter; only, you may remember that Captain Hawksley was a part I was rather fond of attempting myself.'

'Quite right, Jowitt.'

'Now, that's why I should like to get a peep—being a trifle in my line, eh? I might learn a wrinkle, you know. Ha, ha!'

'I think I can manage that,' said Mr Mulford; 'so meet me at the Station Hotel at Selwick about six, and we will discuss the matter further.'

'I will be there. A train leaves here at four-thirty, arriving at five-thirty-five,' said Mr Jowitt, who had been apparently, during the last three or four minutes, amusing himself in turning over the leaves of a local time-table. 'And now,' he continued, glancing at the clock, 'Mully, my boy, I must leave you; I have a little affair to look after. Business, you know, eh?'

'I understand. Farewell, till we meet again.'

'Well, I'm in luck,' mused Mr Jowitt as he left the station. 'Ah, what a lot of chance there is in our profession! Only to think I should meet Mulford, after not having seen him for an age; and, stranger still, that he should happen to be in a position to put me direct on to the scent, after it had been lost by that stupid Dixon. Must be what they used to call in the old plays the "hand of fate!"'

CHAPTER III.

It was a busy and exciting time behind the scenes of the mimic stage at Hop Villa for some two hours previous to the rising of the green

baize curtain upon the first scene of *Still Waters Run Deep*. No expense had been spared in order that the first venture in the way of theatrical entertainment as promoted by Sam Dobson, should appear in the best possible light in the sight of that young gentleman's numerous acquaintances, who had been invited to 'assist' at the representation. A real stage carpenter, who was temporarily out of employment, had been retained to fit up the stage in as complete a manner as limited space would allow of; whilst the scenery, which in the piece in question is not of a very complicated character, had been prepared by one of Sam's particular cronies, who was the 'artist' to a large firm of painters and decorators. The principal scene, a room with trellis-work opening on to a garden at the back, was unanimously voted to be of artistic excellence.

That important adjunct to a theatrical performance, the orchestra, had not been left out of calculation, and the organisation of an amateur band had been intrusted to one who was allowed to be no mean performer on the pianoforte. The musicians who had volunteered their services were not many in number, seven being the total, all told, including the side drum and triangle; but any shortcoming in the matter of quantity was more than made good by the earnestness and ambition of the executants. Truly, they were ambitious, when they selected for the overture that of *Semiramis*. However, by dint of diligent practice—to the horror of the neighbours—at each other's houses in turns, they had so far managed to conquer the difficulty before them, that at the final grand rehearsal there were not more than a couple of bars' difference at the quickest passage between the piccolo and the first violin, the former making the running; and it was pronounced 'Not so bad, considering, don't you know!'

It is not intended to enter into what might be considered a tedious description of 'behind the scenes.' The subject has been about exhausted in one shape or other, and nearly everybody nowadays is more or less well acquainted with the 'seamy side' of the drama. The 'making up'—that is, causing the face to reflect, by the aid of various pigments, colours, burnt cork, &c., the characteristics of and resemblance to the person to be portrayed by the actor—is always, where a conscientious desire exists to be faithful to the author's ideas and intentions, a serious matter with your amateurs, especially young ones. Consequently, this part of the responsibilities of the night which were to be borne by Sam Dobson's dramatic corps, was not considered quite so pleasing as the other portion, involving as it did an almost constant call upon each other's good-nature and forbearance. It certainly was trying for young Smythe, the Markham of the evening, to be called upon by the irrepresible individual before alluded to, who was to appear as Dunbilk, to 'just come and put a nice fine line of Indian ink, me boy, underneath my lower eyelids,' when he (Smythe) was vigorously using the shaving-brush over the whole area of his smooth and round face.

And now, just when the indefatigable orchestra was commencing to operate with all its pristine vigour upon the difficult overture, we must look

in upon Mr Frederick Delancy, undoubtedly as Captain Hawksley, the hero of the evening. As the honoured guest of the house, he had had apportioned a room to his own exclusive use; and whilst in the other parts of the villa, anxiety and no small amount of irritability were being displayed in various forms, he was calmly and self-complacently smoking a cigarette in the depths of a luxurious easy-chair before a cheerful fire.

'At last,' he said with a sigh of satisfaction, addressing the ornament on the chimney-piece—'at last, I believe I am landed in a good safe harbour. The old gentleman believes in me tremendously, in fact his confidence is truly touching; and as for the son, bah! he— Well, I have earned his eternal gratitude by assisting him to carry out the cherished wish of his aspiring career. As for the ladies'—and here the noble captain indulged in a smile of gratified vanity—'why, I can only think I have scored my usual success; though, to be candid with myself, I really do not think the antiquated maiden aunt is particularly taken up with me. But what of that? When once I call the fair Aurelia mine—and I think I shall do her the honour of asking her to be my wife at the first opportune moment after this—this tomfoolery is over—I can afford to treat her with condescending pity. Yes, I think I am perfectly safe at last. I am now a respectable City man, and my credit is becoming better every day. When I am the son-in-law of the substantial Samuel Dobson, who knows to what pinnacle of commercial fame I may not attain? Why, one day I may actually become an alderman of the City of London. And yet I must not lull myself into a feeling of too absolute security; and somehow, to-night, although I consider the future horizon to be free from dark clouds, I have a peculiar—I scarcely know what to call it—foreboding of ill, as superstitious fools would say. Bah! why should I fear? There is only one who could put the life-hounds of the law on my track, and I flatter myself she loved me too well to betray me. I regret only one thing—the not destroying these lovely bank-note plates. The best I ever handled!'

In this strain the gentlemanly forger and possible alderman of the future allowed his thoughts to wander during the playing of the overture; and all the while, Nemesis, in the shape of a wily officer of the law, was nearing him! Yes, Mr Josiah Jowitt had, as agreed, met his friend Marcus Mulford at the Station Hotel, which was situated about a mile from Hop Villa; and had satisfactorily arranged with that worthy—without raising the slightest suspicion in the prompter's breast as to his true motive—to obtain admittance behind the scenes; and in order to pass away the time, the detective solaced himself with sundry refreshments in the snug bar of the inn.

'Bravo! bravo!' cried the delighted and friendly critics, as the act-drop descended at the conclusion of the second act, the scene, known as the 'Office scene,' being the most dramatic one in the whole comedy; and the two principal characters in it, John Mildmay (Sam Dobson)

and Captain Hawksley (Frederick Delaney) had to come before the footlights and bow their acknowledgments in the orthodox manner. Undoubtedly, the performance so far was an unqualified success, and Master Samuel was congratulating himself and everybody else as well. Mr Delaney had proved himself to be an actor of considerable talent; and although great things had been expected of him, the result was a pleasant surprise. It was universally admitted that his finest efforts were those in the scene where the 'captain' encounters Mrs Sternhold, who has taken the place of Mrs Mildmay, in order to defeat Hawksley's insidious designs upon her niece. The fair Aurelia also came in for no small measure of praise for her really fine rendering of the trying part of Mrs Sternhold.

The prompter tinkles his little bell, and the act-drop rises on the third and last act. Amidst the rapt attention of the audience, the concluding portion of the comedy is progressing in the same smooth manner as had marked the earlier part of it. The action of the piece had arrived at that point where the Mildmay household are receiving their guests for the dinner-party, and Gimlet, the detective in the play, had been hurriedly introduced as 'Mr Maxwell from the North,' and had retired to his position in the background. Then followed the entrance of Captain Hawksley, and the exciting episodes of the horsemanship and the proposed duel with pistols, one loaded, the other not, had duly enthralled the audience. John Mildmay then denounces Hawksley as a felon. 'A felon in this house! Where? Police! police!' cries old Potter. Mr Brownsmith was just about to step forward in his character of Gimlet and arrest the 'captain,' alias 'Burgess,' when a little thin man was observed to 'enter' quickly from the wings on the prompt side, and to push himself dexterously between Hawksley and Gimlet, at the same time saying, as he produced and snipped on to the wrists of Hawksley a pair of handcuffs: 'I arrest you, Frederick Delaney, alias Montague, alias Smithson!'

The thing was accomplished in so short a space of time, that both actors and audience had not recovered from their natural surprise at seeing a stranger walk on to the stage and take, as it were, another man's business into his own hands. During the few moments of breathless surprise following the above startling episode, and while the spectators were slowly beginning to realise the fact that something was happening which had evidently not been rehearsed, Josiah Jowitt whispered rapidly to Delaney: 'It's all up gov'nor—woman split—got the plates and the paper; you'll go quietly, won't you? I've got a cab waiting at the door.'

'Those plates! curse me for an idiot!' muttered Delaney beneath his breath as he was being led away.

Young Dobson being the first to recover from the effects of the unlooked-for incident and interruption, inquired, addressing himself to Josiah: 'Who are you?'

'Josiah Jowitt of Scotland Yard, at your service, sir. I arrest this man for forgery. I have a warrant, which you can see if you choose; all in order I assure you, sir!'

Delaney hung his head, making no effort to

dispute the lawfulness of the proceedings. For a few seconds a painful silence reigned upon the mimic stage and amongst the auditors, when it was broken by a faint cry coming from the back of the stage, in which direction, naturally, all eyes were at once directed; and it was observed that the elder of the Misses Dobson appeared to be very agitated, and a deathlike pallor, in spite of the slightest *soupeon* of rouge on her cheeks, showed itself in her face.

'Aurelia,' said the maiden aunt as she stepped on to the stage from the wings, where she had been standing, 'is a little overcome with the heat and the excitement, and at the sudden incident which we have just witnessed as well. —Come, Aurelia, my dear; I will conduct you into the fresh air, which, no doubt, will speedily revive you;' and with this well-timed bit of tact, the elderly one took hold of her niece's arm and led her from the spot.

Mr Dobson, from his position amongst the spectators, had not failed to notice his daughter's perturbation, and he exclaimed beneath his breath: 'Can it be possible? Aurelia in love with that man! What a providential escape, to be sure! I shall be very careful in the future whom I introduce to my household. This comes of picking up chance acquaintances at luncheon bars.'

'Ahem!' coughed the detective. 'Ladies and gents all, I'm very sorry, I'm sure, to have interrupted your little amusement, but I need not tell you that duty is everything. I had learned from—well, from "information received," that my man was located here; so of course I came simply as a matter of business; and I think I may claim your indulgence, sir'—looking at Brownsmith—'for having necessitated at the last moment a *change in the cast*. Gents all, yours to command; good-night, and a happy new year when it comes.' And with this parting wish, Josiah Jowitt and his latest capture marched off the stage on their way to the vehicle which awaited them at the hall door.

This sensational termination to the Dobsonian theatricals formed a relishing topic of conversation for many a night afterwards amongst Sam's friends and acquaintances; but Mr Dobson vowed that, as that had been the first stage-play enacted under his roof, so should it be the last. Samuel to this day considers his father's determination very arbitrary.

SINGULARITY.

ALTHOUGH we have the reputation amongst foreigners of being the most eccentric of nations, perhaps there is nothing to which the average individual Englishman has a stronger objection than to being singular; and this is the more extraordinary when we consider that the performing of some feat which has never been performed by any one before holds out an especial attraction to most Englishmen. Thus, the same man who will put himself to any amount of trouble and expense, and will expose himself to all sorts of difficulties and dangers, in order to scale a virgin peak, or to plant the Union-jack on a spot where the human foot has never yet penetrated, is the most miserable and uncomfortable of beings if

he discovers that he is the only man in an assembly wearing a light suit or a low hat, and would put up with a great amount of privation and disappointment rather than not be, in this respect, as other men are. Of course, the reason for this is, that in the one case Fame is the reward, and in the other that an unenviable distinction is the result. None the less, however, is there a paradoxical touch about it, and one would imagine that a man accustomed to perfect self-dependence in abnormal situations would not be affected by the mere idea that other folk were jeering at him.

As regards the international meaning of the word singularity, it may be said to express in each nation's language that which is not usual in the manners and customs of that nation; but with regard to Englishmen in particular, the word most usually employed is eccentricity. Thus, in those parts of the globe where out-of-door life is all but intolerable during certain hours of the day to all but natives, the solitary British globe-trotter, who has a certain time at his disposal in which to perform a certain amount of sight-seeing work, is a familiar object. Hence the common phrase in such countries descriptive of broiling weather: 'Fit only for Englishmen and dogs.' But in such a case there is some plausible foundation for the application of this epithet to us; whilst in many others we are dubbed eccentric simply because our habits and ideas do not tally exactly with those of our satirists. Hence we are deemed eccentric because we have a firm belief in cold water and fresh air; because we must play cricket wherever we go; because when we meet each other in the streets we do not hug and kiss; because we travel many miles in all weathers in order to see a crumbling bit of old wall or to hear a curious echo. The reverse of all this in the foreign character makes us say, 'What singular people these are!' and, just as that which is one man's meat may be another man's poison, so that which is natural in one nation becomes singularity or eccentricity in another.

But we in England are far less tolerant of eccentricity than are foreigners. The eccentric Briton is gazed at, smiled at, shoulders are shrugged, the remark is made in an apologetic, explanatory tone, 'He is English,' and the matter is dropped. But at our hands the smallest singularity from our point of view meets with open derision and sarcasm. The first Volunteers, the first Bicyclists and Tricyclists who appeared in the London streets underwent a species of constant martyrdom before the *profanum vulgus* became familiar with their presence. Let a man walk through a London suburb in the garb worn by hundreds of men when they are shooting or tramping—knickerbockers, loose coat, and 'Tam o' Shanter bonnet'—and he will be as much stared and grinned at as if he was incased in chain-armour.

And when a certain type of Briton goes abroad, he comports himself in a similar fashion. He sees a Frenchman on a blazing hot day sensibly arrayed in a Panama hat, a bombazine coat, and white duck trousers, and he says, 'What queer beggars these Frenchmen are, to dress themselves like that!' quite oblivious of the fact, that he himself is the 'queer beggar' for preferring to

swelter in a heavy hat, a tight collar, and tweed trousers.

Thus it may be noticed how in the streets of London the most absurdly trivial circumstance attracts public notice. A man tying up his shoe-strings, or having his boots blacked, or buying fruit from a street stall, provided he be well dressed, is an occasion almost for excitement amongst the loafers and gamins; whilst such phenomena as a horse down, or a bill-poster putting up an advertisement, or a slight accident, or the smallest of rows, is as sure to gather an eager, open-mouthed mob as Punch and Judy or a fire-engine.

But the ridiculous stress which we put upon not appearing singular, is even better exemplified in our ordinary everyday life. A man, let us say, when alone invariably drinks beer with his dinner; but if he invites a few friends to dine with him, he would as soon think of having the fish served before the soup, as of permitting a beer-jug to be set on the table. Similarly, it may happen to be an intensely warm evening; but the guest who should choose to come to dinner in a cool light suit would be deemed not only singular, but ill-bred, and would be considered to be setting the proprieties at defiance. To such an extent is this typically English fashion of dressing for dinner in one style during all seasons and under all circumstances carried, that in one of the once princely mercantile houses of the Far East, the employees are absolutely commanded never to sit down to dinner except in evening dress, and the melancholy, ridiculous spectacle is often presented of a couple of junior clerks sitting opposite to one another in all the glory of black coats and white chokers, whilst the thermometer stands at ninety, and a coolie is pulling the punkah with all his might.

Respect for the proprieties is all very well; but when we pay this respect at the cost of common-sense and our personal comfort, it becomes an exacted tribute rather than a voluntary offering. It is this dread of appearing singular which induces men regularly to attend the opera and the fashionable concerts who do not know the difference between the *British Grenadiers* and the *Old Hundredth Psalm*; which makes them 'tip' well-paid officials and servants; shut themselves up in London at that time of the year when the country is most attractive, and do a hundred other things which are distasteful in themselves, and which procures for them a very trifling atom more respect and consideration than if they were left undone. Mrs Grundy has a good deal to answer for in not making the grooves of our everyday lives smoother, but assuredly for nothing more than her crusade against what is called singularity.

But the most extraordinary feature in the popular estimation of what goes to make singularity is the readiness with which people will rush in a diametrically opposite direction, when once the example is set them by some one of influence or position. Thirty years ago, the man who smoked in public was stared at as a singular being; so was the man who wore moustaches; so would have been women of fashion clad in semi-masculine attire and driving out alone; or the man who would have dared to go to his office in the morning clad in a light

suit. The first innovators who dared to burst through the prickly hedge of public opinion suffered for it; but when the gap became pretty large, people rushed through it with something very like enthusiasm, and accommodated themselves to the new fashion with almost ludicrous alacrity.

Now, upon the other side of the question, there are people who sin by running to the opposite extreme. As a rule, the individual who is described as 'being so singular, you know,' is extremely offensive, and there are men who cultivate singularity for the toleration which it wins them from a too good-natured Society, and for the license it gives them to behave in an extraordinary manner. Abernethy with his gruff, insolent manner was tolerated; but when a school of imitators sprang up who possessed the great doctor's manner and not his genius, the public very soon took their real measure, and they learned that what one man may do with impunity, palled upon repetition.

It is not to be supposed for a moment that a second Samuel Johnson, even with the mind of his great model, would be suffered in these days, or that any man would be allowed to arrogate to himself the position of Social Dictator simply on the ground of possessing a strong pair of lungs, or the faculty of silencing an adversary with a sneer.

Inoffensive singularity is oddity, and this, of course, people cannot help—indeed, when the oddity is thoroughly quaint and original, its possessors are in many cases the more pleasing for the possession of it. But the singularity which may be defined as the being what is not natural, simply for the sake of being distinct from the ordinary run of folk, may be included in that great category of national failings and weaknesses which is termed Snobbiism.

THE STORY OF A TRANCE.

In August 187—, I was surgeon of the E. N. Company's steamer *Racehorse*, and we were lying at Madras on our homeward voyage, when, the evening before we sailed, a gentleman named Talbot, a young fellow in the Civil Service, came on board to see the captain. They walked up and down the deck for some time, and then the captain sent for me, and introducing me to the stranger, said: 'Mr Talbot has come to ask me to take charge of his wife, doctor, who is going to honour us with her presence on our voyage out next time; and as he says she is very young and delicate, I thought he might like to speak to you about her.'

I found Mr Talbot very gentlemanly and agreeable, and we spent a pleasant hour together. He told me he had been married about a year; but on account of his wife's health, he had been obliged to leave her behind when he came to India a few months ago; that the doctors at home thought her well enough now to undertake the journey; and that, as he was very anxious to see her again, he wished her to come out at once, in preference to waiting till later in the year, especially as at that time the steamers were more crowded, and she would not be so well attended to. I assured him we should

be very happy to do all we could to make his wife comfortable, and that we had an excellent stewardess, to whom I introduced him. He thanked us very warmly, and slipped a handsome present into the stewardess' hand as he went over the side.

We sailed from Madras next day, and arrived safely in London.

I had almost forgotten my meeting with Mr Talbot, when one morning, a few days before we were due to leave London again, as I was writing in my cabin, the captain being on shore, the quartermaster brought me a card inscribed 'Rev. G. Morris, Ledborough,' and said the gentleman was waiting on the quarter-deck to see me. I at once went out; and found a fine-looking old parson, one of the old school, between sixty and seventy years of age, I should think, who addressed me in a very courteous manner, apologised for disturbing me, but said he had heard from his son-in-law, Mr Talbot of Madras, that I had kindly promised to take charge of his daughter, who was going out to Madras in the *Racehorse*, to join her husband.

I said how pleased I should be to do all I could for the young lady, but trusted that my services would not be required professionally. I showed the old gentleman round the ship and down into the saloons and cabins; and I assured him I would do my best to get Mrs Talbot one of the latter to herself, which, I thought, would not be difficult, as we were rarely crowded with passengers so early in the season; and after half an hour's conversation, we parted, mutually pleased with each other. He left a card for the captain, with a pressing invitation for us both to dine with him that evening at his hotel in the Strand, when he would have the pleasure of introducing us to his daughter.

The captain returned on board shortly afterwards, and I gave him the card and message. He said how sorry he was he had an engagement that evening, but that I must go alone, and make his apologies; which I accordingly did, arriving at the hotel a few minutes before seven, the hour named for dinner. On inquiring for Mr Morris, I was shown by the waiter into a large and handsomely furnished private sitting-room, where a round table was ready laid for dinner. As the door opened, a young lady, who was seated at a piano at the other end of the room, rose and came towards me, and I found myself face to face with Mrs Talbot. I am not good at describing female beauty, but I should like to give you some idea of this lady, with whom I was destined to go through such startling experiences hereafter. She was about eighteen years of age, but looked a year or two older, tall, above the average height of women, with a most perfect figure, which was well set off by the plain, dark-coloured, close-fitting dress she wore. Her hands and feet were small, and beautifully formed. Her fair broad forehead was set off by wavy braids of rich brown hair, and hazel eyes, beautifully softened in their brightness by dark silken lashes. Her face was not strictly beautiful, maybe, from a classical point of view; but I can only say that when she smiled and showed two rows of pearly teeth, and a bewitching dimple in either cheek, I thought I had never seen a more lovely creature.

I had just shaken hands with Mrs Talbot, and was apologising for the non-appearance of Captain G—, when her father came in, and shortly afterwards we sat down to dinner. A capital one it was too, with very good wine.

The conversation during dinner naturally turned upon our coming voyage, and I learned that this was the first time Mrs Talbot had ever been out of England, or had in fact been separated from her parents—to whom she was evidently devotedly attached—for more than a few weeks at a time. She told me, with tears in her lovely eyes, that she had said good-bye to her mother the day before, as Mrs Morris was not strong enough to travel up to town from their home in the west of England, and that she dreaded the parting with her father very much.

'Only natural, my dear May,' said he; 'but think of poor Will in his lonely bungalow at Madras, eagerly expecting your arrival; and cheer up.'

'So I do, papa,' she replied; 'but I dread the parting all the same, and only wish Will would give up that horrid India, and come home, so that we could all be together.'

I thought of the many young, fresh-looking, pretty English girls that I had seen going out to that country, whom I had met only a few years afterwards, looking pale-faced, worn, and quite old, and how much better it would be for her to remain in England; but of course I did not say so.

When dinner was over, we had music; and I found Mrs Talbot played and sang most delightfully; and I thought we had cause to congratulate ourselves upon such an acquisition during our long voyage.

After giving them all sorts of advice about sending their luggage on board and their own embarkation, I took my leave; and as I wended my way eastward, I confided to my cheroot what a charming creature I thought Mrs Talbot, and how much I considered Talbot was to be envied.

The days passed on, and the morning of our departure arrived; and about noon I saw the small steamer that brings off the passengers coming alongside the *Racehorse* where she was lying in the river off Gravesend. I was called away just at the moment, and on returning shortly afterwards, found Mr Morris and his daughter on the quarter-deck talking to the captain. I was rather vexed at not having been the first to welcome them on board; but this feeling soon passed away, and I set myself to work to assist them in getting their traps down into the cabin, which, as I thought, I had been able to secure for Mrs Talbot alone. I must pass over the parting between father and daughter—it is too sacred to be lightly touched upon; and though one in my position sees so much of that sort of thing, I was very much affected by it. As the old man went over the side to return to the shore, leaving his child behind him, whom he might never see in this world again, the tears stood in his eyes, and I think also in mine, as he pressed my hand, bade God bless me, and whispered: 'Take care of her; she is very sensitive, and will, I know, feel these partings very much.'

I was still gazing at the small steamer, which was now at some distance from the *Racehorse*, thinking how many sad hearts were on board her,

and especially of the brave old man who was returning to his childless home, when I was interrupted by the stewardess, who informed me that Mrs Talbot, after parting from her father, had retired to her cabin, where she had had a succession of fainting-fits, followed by an hysterical burst of tears. I gave Mrs Abbott directions what to do, said she was to be kept perfectly quiet, and that I would come and see her later on, but that at present I thought the fewer people she saw, the better. By this time we were under way; and as the good ship threaded her course down the crowded river, I turned to have a look at the other passengers, who were nearly all at that time on deck. They were the usual sort we have before the really busy season commences, mostly Civil Service and other government officials returning from their three months' leave, with very few ladies. But one, I may as well say a few words about now, as she plays an important part in my story, though I did not make her acquaintance till some time later. She was a Mrs Johns, a very handsome Eurasian (or 'half-caste,' as we call them), wife of a government pleader in Calcutta, who, though not in society there, yet gave herself no end of airs, on the strength, I suppose, of the many rupees her husband was making. She was a tall, fine woman of about thirty, I believe, but looked some years older, with flashing black eyes, and, like all those people, dressed in the most magnificent style. At first sight, she gave one the impression of being a supercilious and disagreeable woman; but I afterwards found that beneath the layer of affectation, she possessed a warm and kind heart. She travelled with her ayah and kitmutghar (native table servant), and quite looked down upon those who were not similarly accompanied.

Some hours afterwards, as I walked up and down the deck with a young fellow in the P. W. D., who had taken a former trip with us, I noticed Mrs Abbott the stewardess standing by the companion hatchway, evidently wishing to speak to me. I went forward, and asked her how Mrs Talbot was. She told me that she had at last fallen asleep, but not before she had completely worn herself out with crying. Even now, she was not quiet, but moaning and sighing in her sleep. The stewardess then whispered something in my ear, at which I started, and exclaimed: 'Impossible! The doctors would never have allowed her to make the voyage if such were the case.'

'You will find I am right,' replied Mrs Abbott. 'But I wish, sir, you would come and see her.'

I at once went below with the stewardess, thinking what a complication this would make, if true. As I entered the cabin where Mrs Talbot was lying on a sofa, looking, I thought, very pale and exhausted, she opened her eyes, showing how light her sleep had been, and holding out her hand, said with a slight blush: 'You little thought I should so soon be in your hands professionally, Dr Weston; but I told you how I dreaded the parting with my father; and you see my instincts were true. I fell asleep just now, and oh!—she shuddered—'what horrid dreams I had. I dreamt that I died on the voyage, and was buried in the Red Sea, and'—

'Hush, my dear young lady,' said I, seeing how excited she was becoming. 'Try and compose yourself by looking forward to your happy meeting with your husband.'

'Ah! Will, poor Will,' she cried, 'I shall never see you again either;' and she burst into an uncontrollable fit of weeping.

Seeing my presence had only the effect of exciting her more, I quitted the cabin, telling the stewardess not to allow her to talk, but to give her the medicine I would send, at once. As soon as I had despatched one of the stewards with the draught, I went to my cabin to dress for dinner. While dressing, I thought a good deal about my fair patient. She was, I could see, of a very excitable temperament, one of those highly and sensitively organised creatures who feel pain and pleasure far more acutely than we more phlegmatic ones can imagine. I trusted a night's rest would do her great good, and that before we reached Malta, she would be quite herself again. Vain hope; but I must not anticipate.

Next morning, I was delighted to hear that Mrs Talbot had passed a quiet night, and felt well enough to come on deck. She continued to improve, but did not seem to recover her spirits, and more than once I found her in tears. 'Do not scold me,' she said on one occasion; 'I know how foolish it is; but I can't help it, when I think of those two dear old things at home, to whom I was all in all, and how they will get on without me. I feel so miserable, and half inclined to return home from Gibraltar.'

I tried to soothe her by again saying she should try to look forward, instead of back; but it seemed of no use; she appeared to shrink from all mention of her husband's name, and I began to wonder why. I knew she had been married very young—when barely seventeen, in fact; but I understood it to be a love-match, and— Well, you see, being a bachelor myself, I suppose I couldn't make it out.

We chatted away on different subjects for some time, and I was glad to see her getting into a more cheerful frame of mind. She told me, among other things, that she had made the acquaintance of Mrs Johns, who, though vulgar, was yet amusing in her intense conceit.

We had a smooth passage to Gibraltar; the much-maligned Bay of Biscay, that all seem so much to dread, was as calm as a millpond; and on anchoring there, I went for a run on shore with young Moncrieff, the P.-W.-D. man I spoke of. We were to sail again at five P.M., so in good time we drove down to the *Ragged Staff* and returned to the ship.

On arriving on board, I was shocked to hear from Mrs Abbott, that shortly after I had gone ashore, the mail-boat came off, and that Mrs Talbot got a letter, which she took to her cabin, where the stewardess found her shortly afterwards in a dead faint, from which she had some difficulty in reviving her.

I went down at once, and found Mrs Talbot still sobbing hysterically. She told me all had happened as she expected—that the letter was from her father, who wrote that on his return home he had found her dear mother ill in bed, evidently overcome by the shock of her daughter's departure.

I was sure she was making the worst of matters, and exaggerating what her father had written, as I felt certain he was too sensible to write such a thing, even if it were the case; but all I could say was of no avail, so I left her to the care of the stewardess.

I will not weary you with accounts of Mrs Talbot's health from day to day; suffice it to say she was again getting better, when a fearful shock awaited her at Malta. Among the letters brought on board there was one for her with a deep black border, addressed in a man's hand. Not knowing Mr Morris's handwriting, I thought at first it was from him, containing the news of her mother's death; but on looking again, I saw the postmark was 'Glasgow;' and smiling to myself to think how nervous I was getting on Mrs Talbot's behalf, I took the letter down to her, forgetting that she might very likely jump to the same conclusion, which, unfortunately, proved to be the case; for, not finding her in the saloon, I knocked at her cabin door, which she opened, and seeing the black-edged letter in my hand, shrieked out: 'She is dead! and you have come to break the news to me. O my poor mother!' and fell fainting into my arms.

I laid her on the sofa and called loudly for the stewardess. Mrs Johns was in her cabin opposite, and hearing me calling, rushed in to see what was the matter, and assisted me in restoring her to consciousness. This took a long time, which rather alarmed me, especially as I felt how feeble her pulse was; but at last we succeeded, and Mrs Johns kindly assisted the stewardess to undress and put her to bed. I went to the surgery to get her some medicine, inwardly anathematising myself for having behaved so foolishly as to take down the letter as I did; but who could have foreseen the consequences?

On my return, I found her lying with her eyes wide open, but noticing nothing; and it was a long time before I could make her understand the letter was not from her father at all, but from Glasgow. When she did at last comprehend it, she exclaimed: 'From my uncle! Oh, thank God! My dear mother!' and burst into tears.

I am afraid you will think my patient a regular Niobe; but you must remember what I have told you of her excitable disposition, her present state, and all she had gone through.

When I saw her next morning, I thought she seemed a little better, but alas! I was mistaken; the shock had been too much for her, and she became worse and worse until we arrived at Suez.

I was terribly anxious then as to what effect the heat of the Red Sea in September would have upon her, but at the same time knew it was out of the question thinking of landing her in her present state, so determined to do the best I could for her, hoping that, once the terrible Sea was passed in safety, the refreshing breezes of the Indian Ocean would pull her round a bit before we reached Colombo.

The heat of the Red Sea was truly fearful, the little wind there was being after us, so that the smoke from our funnels ascended in a perfectly straight column; and I confess that more than once I thought of her dream, and how fearfully probable it seemed that it would come true.

The captain gave up his cabin on deck to her, which, being fitted with a punkah and jalousies that opened all round, was by far the coolest place in the ship, especially as we had the roof covered with canvas kept wet, which somewhat tempered the rays of the fierce sun, which seemed to burn right through our double awnings. With some trouble, we succeeded in moving her, bed and all, up here; and Mrs Johns, who was kindness itself, and the stewardess watched by her in turns. But she seemed to get lower and lower, and at last one Saturday night, as Mrs Johns and myself were sitting by her, she gave one sigh, and all was over!

I went to report the fact to the captain, who was terribly cut up. Just imagine our feelings. Putting aside our grief for her who was gone, how could we meet the young husband at Madras, who was now probably counting the hours until his beloved wife should be with him, and tell him we had left his darling in the Red Sea, that terrible Sea, where so many of England's loved ones lie sleeping till the day when the 'sea shall give up her dead?' Of course we could break the news by telegram from Aden, but even then there were all the sorrowful details to be given.

We went together to look at her. Mrs Johns and the stewardess had done what was necessary; and as we gazed on her, she appeared more like one in a quiet sleep than a dead creature.

'How beautiful she looks!' said the captain.

'Yes,' replied I; 'so young and lovely to be taken, while the old and haggard are left. What a mystery it all is!'

Day was now breaking, and the captain arranged that she should be buried that evening. The forenoon passed on, and each of the passengers having visited and taken a silent farewell of the dead, nothing now remained but to provide the shroud, before committing the body to the deep, so I sent for the old sailmaker to perform his melancholy part of the business. He had taken the measure and again left the cabin, and all was still, when, as I was leaning over the side, looking at the water and thinking of her who was gone, I was startled by the captain rushing with staring eyes from the cabin, shouting: 'Doctor, doctor! she's not dead. Come and see; she moved just now.'

I hastened with him to the cabin, and saw at once that what he said was true. Her hands, which had been folded across her body, were now apart; and the captain explained, that having wished to take a last look at her before the sailmaker completed his work, he had gone into the cabin, and that, as he was leaving, he had stooped to press a kiss on her hands, when they had moved to the position I saw them.

My yarn is already longer than I intended, so I will not trouble you with a description of how we brought her round, but tell you that in a few hours' time she was able to speak, when, to our horror, she told us that she had never lost consciousness, but had heard all we had said from first to last, though unable to move, or of course to see, as her eyes were closed—that she had actually felt the sailmaker taking her measure; and was quite aware that in a few hours, unless she made some sign, her burial would take place; and it was only at the last

moment, by a supreme effort, she had been able to move her hands as described.

Can you imagine anything more awful? and yet, strange to say, it had no ill effect on her mind, though one would almost have thought it would have driven her mad.

From that day, she seemed to recover, and by the time we arrived at Colombo, was able to sit on deck, and, on our reaching Madras, to welcome the husband she never expected to see more.

By her own earnest wish, no one told him the whole facts of the case, only that she had been very ill, as she wished to tell him all herself when they were alone.

My story is rather a melancholy one; but it is true in every respect, except that names, dates, and places are altered, for the lady is still alive, and the happy mother of a family.

WAITING FOR A RISE.

BY A KEEN ANGLER.

ONE bright day in the end of April, some years ago, I was fishing Loch Awe with Dugald M'Intyre, a thorough Celt and first-class boatman. There was hardly a breath of air, and far too bright a sun. We were close to the rocks in a little bay on the west side, into which fell a small river. I dropped my fly on to the nearest rock and let it fall into the water; it was at once taken by a lusty trout—a three-quarter pounder. After securing him, I happened to look round, and saw a cat's-paw rippling the loch from the south. 'Pull out a bit, Dugald.' As the ripple reached us, I took a good fish. The ripple increased to a slight breeze, all the rest of the loch as far as we could see being calm. In forty minutes I had nine good trout, weighing over ten pounds. Then the breeze died away, and never another fish rose.

'Ah,' says Dugald, 'we will *do* old C—to-day.' And so we did, for every other boat came in clean.

'Well, what's to be done now, Dugald?'

'I think we had better go ashore and get our lunch,' was the wise suggestion of my boatman.

So ashore we went. Two other boats finding it useless, pulled to join us; and a party of eight sat down on the soft turf at the mouth of the stream, and ate and drank and smoked and talked.

'You're in luck to-day, doctor,' said one.

'Yes; the prettiest bit of sport I ever saw on a loch, short as it lasted.'

Just as I spoke, I heard my reel go crick-crick. On springing to the rod, I found something heavy on it, which turned out to be an eel about a pound-weight, which had got caught by my flies, which I had carelessly allowed to sink in the water from the stern of the boat. The nasty varmint was landed, having of course destroyed the casting-line beyond all disentanglement.

'Did you ever know eels take the fly by the mouth?' asked one of the party.

'Yes,' replied another. 'One night, when fishing the Eden at Carlisle, I was obliged to stop on account of eels. They were on the run;

and six good-sizers got caught on my flies, three of which were taken by the mouth.'

'Did you ever live in a thorough eel-country?' I asked.

'No. What do you mean?'

'Well,' I replied, 'if you had ever lived in New Zealand, you would know what an eel-country means. The size and numbers of these creatures are beyond belief. Don't mistake what I am about to say for a traveller's tale; I appeal to any old Pakeha to corroborate me, with the utmost confidence. Why, one of the commonest ways in which the Maori takes them is to walk through a swamp and "proge" the mud and roots with a long thin narrow spear—quite casually—he never sees them; but when his spear transfixes one, he feels it. Then he slips his foot below the fish, gets the spear between his big and second toes, and so lands him. In this way he will take a good "kitful" in a few hours. As to size, we had a great joke against the old Sixty-fifths, who were quartered out there for many years. The story goes, that shortly after they arrived in the colony, a detachment was ordered up to the Hutt valley, some ten or twelve miles from Wellington. Some of the men went out fishing one night in the Hutt river. First one fellow pulled out a sizable eel; soon another hauled out what he considered a boomer, and made them all stare a bit; but a third pulled out by a powerful effort such a boa-constrictor-looking brute that all the Tommy Atkins bolted in a mob.

'But the queerest dodge for killing eels I ever saw was at Whanganui. Near the mouth of the river there is a series of large lagoons, which communicate with the river by numerous very shallow small streams running through the sand. The natives had told some of us that these lagoons teemed with eels, which were on the run any moonless night. Accordingly, a party of us started off one evening in a canoe, armed with spears. But a bright thought had struck the leader, poor little Charlie B——, who was shortly afterwards murdered in cold blood by the rebels up the coast. He came equipped with an old blunt cutlass, and a bundle of torches made of reeds and steeped in tar and paraffin.

'What are you doing with the toasting-fork, Charlie?'

'Wait a bit and you shall see.'

'After a paddle of some three miles, we landed at one of the outlet streams. Sure enough, there were plenty of eels, many of them of great size. By the light of the torches, we could see them squirming about in all directions. A few were got with spears; but it was Charlie who did the trick.

'Now look here,' says he. 'One of you come on one side of me with a torch, and another on the other; go quietly, and hold the light steady.'

'Two of us obeyed.'

'Now then, steady.'

'Out bolts a specimen some three feet or so long. Down goes the cutlass, cutting him half through, and pinning him to the hard sand.

'Up with him.'

'This was easier said than done. First, their proverbial slipperiness asserted itself; and second, they bit like dogs. Such a scene of fun and laughter—one fellow head-over-heels in the water, another objurgating the monster in a series of

"explosive commas" for biting him. At last he was secured. Soon Charlie got more expert; he managed to clip most of them near the head, and so they were handled with less danger. In three hours we filled, or nearly filled, two gunny-bags (raw-sugar bags), and started home with fully a hundredweight of fish. The largest weighed eight pounds. I don't suppose you will believe me, but I once saw an eel taken by Maoris from Willie W——'s little lake, Grasmere, near Whanganui, over twenty pounds. They brought him in on a stick run through the head. As they carried him, the ends of the stick resting on their shoulders, his tail trailed on the ground.—You smile. Well, there are some things you can never get fellows to believe. Now, you can never get a non-colonial Englishman to believe that a buck-jumper can buck the saddle over his head without bursting the girths.—You snigger again. It can't be helped. But such is the fact. I have seen a horse do it three times in one hour.—Hillo! there's a bit of a breeze. Let's give the trout another chance.'

'What shall we try now, Dugald? That's a good fly.'

'Oh, a very good fly.'

'What do you think of that one?'

'Oh, it is a very good fly too.'

'Which shall we try?'

'Ay, ay, sir, that will be the question.'

But no further opinion could I extract from Dugald, and no more fish from the loch.

AN OLD LETTER.

ONLY a letter,
Yellow and dim with age:
Wistfully gazing,
I hold the torn old page.

Only a token
From one who loved me well;
The faded writing
Scarce the fond words can tell.

Only a letter,
Yet dearer far to me
Than all else beside,
Minding me, love, of thee.

Only a letter,
Yellow and old and torn;
On my heart it lies,
Now I am old and worn.

Only a message,
Tender and true and sweet,
The writer long dead—
Never again we meet.

Only a letter,
Hid in an oaken chest;
Close, close to my heart,
When I am laid to rest!

KATIE M. LUCK.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.